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# THE Baptist Record

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## BRIEFS

### SEARCH COMM. SET FOR SWBTS TOP JOB

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP and local reports) — Southwestern Seminary trustee chairman Kevin Ueckert, senior pastor of First Church, Georgetown, Texas, appointed a nine-member search committee on Aug. 23 to recommend the replacement for former seminary President Paige Patterson, who was fired May 30 by trustees. Danny Roberts, an at-large trustee and executive pastor of North Richland Hills Church in the Texas city of the same name, will serve as search committee chairman. No Mississippi Baptist trustees were appointed to the search committee.

### PEW RESEARCH MARKS HIGHEST SPIRITUALITY

WASHINGTON (BP) — Commitment to prayer, church attendance, and religious belief are highest among Christians in sub-Saharan Africa, America, Pew Research Center said Aug. 22 in an analysis of data collected over the past 10 years. More than 75% of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa said religion is very important. Among Latin American countries, 80% of Christians say they pray daily. Religion is least important in Germany, United Kingdom, and Europe overall, Pew found. "These findings reflect the broader pattern of Christianity's 'march southward' from wealthy countries to developing ones," Pew researchers said.

### HARVEY ANNIVERSARY: WORK LEFT TO BE DONE

HOUSTON (BP and local reports) — Hurricane Harvey's Category 4 winds began battering the Texas coast a year ago, and Southern Baptists from across the country — including hundreds of Mississippi Baptists — have served more than 75,000 volunteer days to help the region. They aren't done yet, says David Melber, president of Send Relief at Southern Baptist's North American Mission Board. Southern Baptists will continue to engage impacted areas for at least the next two years and likely beyond, he predicts.



**PRAYER FOR UNITY** — Executive directors of Baptist state conventions pray for Southern Baptist Convention president J.D. Greear (seated, left) and convention first vice president A.B. Vines (seated, right) during an Aug. 20 meeting in Atlanta. (BP photo)

## 'Gospel-above-all culture'

### seek spirit of cooperation

ATLANTA (BP and local reports) — Agreements to "assume the best in one another" and that a "Gospel-above-all culture needs to prevail" in the Southern Baptist Convention were among the outcomes when Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president J.D. Greear

and convention first vice president A.B. Vines met Aug. 20 with 15 executive directors of state conventions affiliated with the SBC.

"These are the leaders who have been leading in the things before I became president and likely will be there leading af-

ter my term. I wanted to know how I could serve them, catalyze their efforts in evangelism and mobilization, and bring cohesion to many of the wonderful things already going on throughout the SBC."

Greear will meet in the future with other state executive directors and leaders of churches, associations, and SBC entities, according to an Aug. 21 news release from Greear's office.

see SBC on p. 10

## GuideStone wins abortion mandate fight

DALLAS (Special) — A final judgment has been entered in favor of GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in litigation over the Obama-era contraceptive mandate that would have required certain ministries served by GuideStone to provide abortion-causing drugs and devices, or face crippling fines.

The judgment brings to an end the case GuideStone filed against the federal government to protect its health plan and the ministries it serves.

The litigation, which made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court in 2016 where the justices ruled unanimously in favor of GuideStone and its co-plaintiffs, was sent back to the trial court for final disposition.



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"This is an important conclusion for our case where we finally have a clear declarative judgment that says the government cannot force a church-controlled organization like GuideStone to violate its faith in the manner the previous administration attempted to do,"

GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said.

"We are thankful for the prayers and support of our trustees, of the counsel we had from the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, and from others who spent tireless hours work-

see GUIDESTONE on p. 10

## Hunt to accept NAMB position

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Johnny Hunt, longtime senior pastor of First Church, Woodstock, Ga., and past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has been nominated to join the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB) as senior vice president of evangelism and leadership.



HUNT

"I want to lead Southern Baptist churches to put evangelism back on the front burner again," Hunt said in an Aug. 26 announcement. "Jesus came to seek and save the lost, we know what He is doing. We must join Him."

NAMB trustees will vote on Hunt's nomination at their upcoming meeting Oct. 2.

Hunt shared in worship services at his church on the morning of Aug. 26 that

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### King of Comebacks

**W**e all know an important battle in a long social and spiritual war is taking place. It's been ugly. It's going to get uglier. Many millions of lives have already been lost, and many millions more will be lost in the years to come if evil is victorious. We must continue the fight for the little ones who cannot fight for themselves.

The back-and-forth nature of this conflict can be maddening. Some years are encouraging for the pro-life cause; some are downright deflating. Where unfettered abortion is concerned, Satan is the King of Comebacks.

Take 2016, for example. David Daleiden is the founder of the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) in Irvine, Ca., and the driving force behind a three-year undercover investigation that revealed Planned Parenthood's ghastly dismembering of still-born, aborted babies for the sale of their body parts.

Exposing evil-doers is a good thing, right? Who could be against that? A grand jury in Houston, Texas, for one, led by Republican Harris County District Attorney Devon Anderson. That grand jury was initially empaneled to investigate the alleged wrongdoing by Planned Parenthood as exposed in the CMP undercover videos.

However, the grand jury under the direction of Anderson cleared Planned Parenthood and instead indicted Daleiden on one felony count of tampering with a governmental record and one misdemeanor count related to an offer to purchase human organs.

Anderson would not release details of the grand jury findings, but the felony counts of record tampering against Daleiden and a CMP employee, Susan Merritt, apparently involve the alleged production of fictitious driver licenses that were used during the undercover investigation.

The misdemeanor count apparently involves a letter Daleiden wrote to Planned Parenthood as a set-up for the undercover videos.

"The [CMP] video of the Houston Planned Parenthood makes it appear the Planned Parenthood abortion business may be selling the 'fully intact' bodies of unborn babies purposefully born alive and left to die," said Steven Ertelt, editor of the pro-life LifeNews.com

web site, in a press release after the indictments were announced.

"The video shows the Director of Research for Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast, Melissa Farrell, advertising the Texas Planned Parenthood branch's track record of fetal tissue sales, including its ability to deliver fully intact aborted babies," Ertelt said. "Instead of prosecuting Planned Parenthood for selling aborted baby parts, Daleiden was indicted for buying them. If convicted, Daleiden faces 20 years in prison while Planned Parenthood officials face no legal consequences for their actions."

Not to be outdone in punishing Daleiden for his brazen truth-telling, Planned Parenthood on Jan. 14 filed a federal civil lawsuit in San Francisco alleging CMP had, in the course of its undercover investigation, committed violations of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act — otherwise used to prosecute organized crime cases — and engaged in mail fraud, invasion of privacy, illegal secret recording, and trespassing.

Daleiden was unperturbed. "I look forward to deposing all the CEOs, medical directors, and their co-conspirators who participated in Planned Parenthood's illegal baby body parts racket," he said in a statement after news broke of Planned Parenthood's lawsuit against him.

Therein lies the epic battle. Will the abortion industry finally be exposed for the malignant entity that it truly is, or will pro-life practitioners be pounded into the ground once and for all? Will David Daleiden and anti-abortion crusaders like him finally be eliminated?

Few people likely thought they would ever live in an America where right is so despised and defied, and wrong so proudly defended and deified. The Word of God comes to mind as handed down to the Apostle Paul in Romans 1, where he speaks of the depravity of his generation: They suppressed truth. Although they claimed to be wise, they were actually fools. They did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God. They invented new ways of doing evil. They even applauded those who practiced wrongdoing. They deserve death.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

## Really, really bad movies

**A**s major movie studios produced such classics as Ben Hur (1959), All About Eve (1950), and 12 O'Clock High (1949), some independent wannabe filmmakers begat the likes of Robot Monster (1953) and First Spaceship on Venus (1960), F-grade movies that tested the belief that no one sets out to make a bad movie.

B-movies like Laserblast (1978) and Teenage Caveman (1958) are not made today. It's just too difficult a process for unqualified moviemakers to get enough financing to make the type of films for which Roger Corman became famous — Night of the Cobra Woman (1972) and Ed Wood (1994), the latter a biopic on the life of 50's B-movie maker Edward D. Wood Jr.

That said, there are still bad movies being foisted on the public each year. Some of them even win awards.

Though the aesthetic merits of today's bad movies are not of the bomb-quality of Plan 9 from Outer Space (1959) — considered the worst film of all time and written/directed by none other than Ed Wood himself — the current era's bad movies are far more destructive because their content and themes seem bent on directing man away from the true creative source, our heavenly Father.

OK, the Hollywood industry's goal was never about paying tribute to God. The intent was to entertain the masses and make as many bucks off Shirley Temple and Lassie as possible. However, the secularist leanings of many a movie mogul has taken a decidedly more agnostic stance in recent times.

For example, the rom/dram I'll See You in My Dreams (2015) starred Blythe Danner, Mary Kay Place, and Rhea Perlman as feisty old ladies looking to fill up their remaining years. Though not a B-movie, it does make my point that a misguided message in a well-constructed production can be far more destructive than incompetent filmmaking.

Christ's name is abused several times in that production, with all the cast getting a chance to play cantankerous sexagenarians who swear. There's occasional sex talk around a card table and drinking to excess throughout. Though the writer attempts to portray the ladies as dimensional and full of life, for me they came across as crude, self-centered, and myopic.

The characters are bored, so because they have enough money they plan on taking a trip to Iceland. Why? They don't know what else to do. It would never occur to them to find an outlet that serves others in need.



**Guest opinion**  
with Phil Boatwright

Their lives would be far more complete if they sought ways to aid their fellow man instead of waiting for night to fall so they could sing karaoke at the local bar.

The movie's theme — fill up your life while you can — addresses no true spiritual matter. Though entering the last season of their lives, none of the characters discuss or consider an afterlife. Really? You make a picture about people in the December of their years and none of your characters brings up the subject of the hereafter?

Life lessons can be gleaned from secular moviemakers and their medium, but we should be cautious of those who tutor without regard for biblical directives. The humanist who discounts spiritual fulfillment through Christ does not heed the biblical warning: "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death" (Proverbs 14:12 NIV).

The Bible is a guidepost that keeps us in harmony with the heavenly Father and with our fellow man. By studying Scripture, we gain an understanding of the nature of God. What's more, knowing His Word will help us see through any hedonistic standards that creep into our daily lives, including those from nonreligious movie auteurs.

Sorry for what may have read as a sermon to the choir, but it never hurts to be reminded of the need to reverence God and study His Word.

As to today's entertainment: Even if it amuses, did the film you've just watched fail to uplift the culture or the soul of man? As the Apostle Paul counseled in Ephesians 5:11, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

*Boatwright, a Los Angeles-based entertainment critic, is the author of MOVIES: The Good, the Bad, and the Really, Really Bad, which is available on Amazon.com. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style, length, and inclusion of additional information.*

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# U.S. Army chaplain cleared of accusations

**FORT BRAGG, N.C. (BP and local reports)** — The U.S. Army concluded its investigation of U.S. Army Chaplain (Maj.) Jerry Scott Squires on Aug. 24, fully exonerating the Southern Baptist of charges leveled by a lesbian soldier who wanted to attend a marriage retreat led by Squires but was advised by him to transfer to another retreat because of his religious beliefs.

"This is great news for both Chaplain Squires and all of the military chaplains who are serving our men and women the U.S. Armed Services," said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Douglas L. Carver (Ret.), executive director of chaplaincy at the North American Mission Board (NAMB) in Alpharetta, Ga.

"It is a significant victory for all who support and defend the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, especially regarding the freedom of religion," said Carver, former U.S. Army chief of chaplains.

Squires had been charged with unlawful discrimination and dereliction of duty, and could have faced confinement in a military prison.

Carver thanked Squires' commanding general "for having the moral courage to make the correct but difficult decision regarding the investigation into Chaplain Squires."

An Army investigating officer initially determined that Squires had discriminated against the lesbian soldier and recommended that Squires face disciplinary action.



**CHARGES DROPPED** — Southern Baptist Chaplain (Maj.) Jerry Scott Squires (center) visits with North American Mission Board (NAMB) president Kevin Ezell (left) and U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Douglas L. Carver (Ret.), executive director of chaplaincy at NAMB, at the Southern Baptist Convention's 2018 annual meeting in Dallas this past June. (BP photo courtesy of NAMB)

Mike Berry, the attorney from First Liberty Institute representing Squires, argued that Squires' actions adhered to Army protocol by taking the appropriate steps to provide the service that Squires could not personally oversee or attend per the policy of his endorser. The Army agreed that Squires followed the correct procedure.

The web site for First Liberty Institute states, "As a nonprofit organization, First Liberty fights

for people of all faiths whose religious liberty has been threatened or whose First Amendment rights have been violated. Even better, we do it for free." The organization is headquartered in Plano, Texas.

Throughout the investigation, Squires continued to fulfill his duties as an Army chaplain but with the investigation dismissed, he no longer has to worry about the prospect of facing disciplinary action.

"Few chaplains have endured the investigative scrutiny that Chaplain Squires suffered over the last seven months," Carver said. "We applaud Chaplain Squires and all chaplains like him who remain dedicated to their faith while seeking to respect all persons within the diverse military community."

NAMB, the entity that endorsed Squires, augmented its ministry guidelines for chaplains in 2013 after the U.S.

Supreme Court struck down Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, which had defined marriage only in terms of opposite sex unions.

"In a technical sense, military chaplains are 'on loan' to the Armed Forces from their respective faith groups who, in turn, expect the military to be faithful stewards of our pastors in uniform," Carver pointed out.

Squires has "our full support and prayers as he remains faithful to his Lord, his tenets of faith, and his commitment to serve all soldiers under his care," Carver stressed. "From the moment the investigation began Southern Baptists have stood behind chaplain Squires with their prayerful support, wise counsel, and encouraging words."

"Our partners in the Gospel from other denominations faithfully stood with us as well. We are here to ensure that our chaplains can exercise their religious freedom and model the tenets of our faith as Southern Baptists in an uncompromising and Christ-honoring manner."

Southern Baptist chaplains are expected to respectfully serve within the pluralistic culture of the military with grace and charity, obeying such biblical commands as Romans 12:18, if at all possible, to "live at peace with everyone," according to NAMB chaplain policy.

More than 1,600 Southern Baptist chaplains serve the U.S. military. NAMB endorses those chaplains on behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention.

## Pastor porn addiction tackled in seminary-based, free e-book

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Special)** — A free e-book, *Porn and the Pastor: The Life and Death Consequences of Addiction in Ministry*, has been published jointly by Southern Equip, a resource center for pastors at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and The Gospel Coalition, a non-Southern Baptist fellowship of churches in the Reformed tradition.

The e-book, edited by C. Jeffery Robinson and Garrett Kell, is available as a download at The Gospel Coalition web site, [thegospelcoalition.org](http://thegospelcoalition.org).

According to a 2016 study by the Barna Group, 14% of pastors admitted they currently struggle with pornography, 57% said they have struggled with porn in the past; and five percent of pastors reported they were currently addicted.

The book addresses this widespread problem by first addressing pornography use as a sin problem, then developing strategies for fighting the sin and cultivating accountability.

"As porn use has risen in the church and has infiltrated the lives of church leaders, an entire host of questions has arisen regarding the care for those who have fallen, alongside questions as to how best to protect the purity of local churches," Robinson and Kell write in the introduction.

"Like a deadly rattlesnake, porn is not an issue to be trifled with, and it must be confronted intentionally,

vigorously and perennially among the people of God."

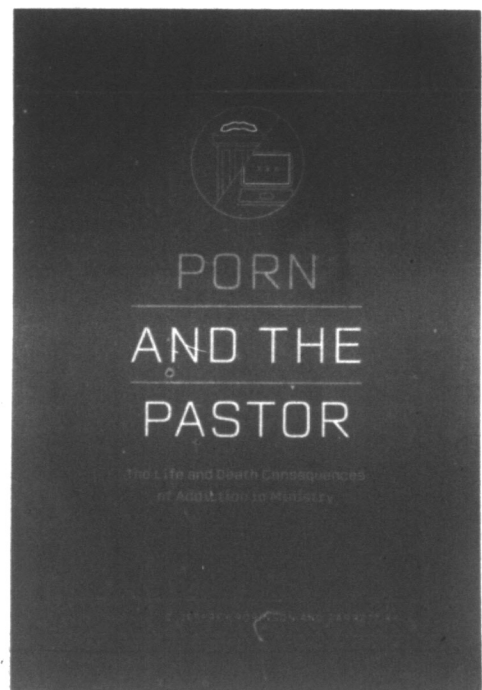
The book features 11 chapters written by an array of evangelical voices curated from Southern Equip and The Gospel Coalition. Kell contributes a chapter titled: *I Was a Porn-Addicted Pastor*, in which he tells his own story as a pastor in his mid-20s in the throes of pornography addiction.

After a painful, year-long process of confessing his sin to his church, Kell was restored to ministry. He is now pastor of Del Ray Church in Alexandria, Va., and an associate council member at The Gospel Coalition.

In his chapter, Kell uses his story to call other pastors to repentance and renewal in the midst of hidden sin. "There's something freeing about the light, even if it makes you wince because you've been in the dark for so long."

"That year God reached into the darkness of my image-protecting hypocrisy, and pulled me into his liberating light. It was through this deliverance that I learned to trust him in ways that had only been theoretical before."

Boyce College professor Denny Burk contributed a chapter titled: *Pursue God, Not Pornography*. He challenges pastors to take serious steps to deal with such a serious sin. The process of restoration should begin with repentance both to God and to another believer, and this confession should be just the first step in a long process of accountability, Burk writes.



Recently at a conference I was attending at one of our churches, a lady from the church was telling me about an experience she had with her young granddaughter. They were riding along on their way to church, and as so many of our churches have an adjoining cemetery nearby, the little girl said to her grandmother, "There are a lot of flowers out in the dead garden." The grandmother, who like me had never heard of the dead garden, wondered what she was talking about. The little girl was pointing to the cemetery with the flowers that were out there that the people had placed around the graves; she was just commenting that there were a lot of flowers in the dead garden. As we talked about it, the grandmother was wondering what goes through a child's mind and I was too. Just out of her own little mental process and connectivity with death and life and church, the little girl said it was the dead garden. While none of us had ever heard of that, it was probably because nobody had said it. The little girl had put it together as she perceived it to be because there were dead people who were placed out there and there were flowers around the graves and it did look like a garden in some ways. And so there it was, right there before all us older folks, the dead garden.

The more I thought about it over the next day or so, it became more and more vivid to me about the dead garden. In fact, as I thought about it I realized that Jesus was familiar with the dead garden. Some of the most memorable things that He did and said took place in, at, and around the dead garden. If you want to read the whole story, it is in John 11. Jesus had gotten word that his friend Lazarus had died. By the time they arrived at the funeral, it was all over, and Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, were really in despair because Jesus had gotten there so late.



## The Dead Garden

Finally, days later when Jesus arrived, He asked the question, "Where have you laid him" (John 11:34)? They took him out to the dead garden, and there things truly became exciting. Just for your individual thoughts about coming to a dead garden as Jesus did, let me point out three simple, yet wonderful things about that moment in Jesus' life.

**The first one is this – Jesus comes to the dead garden.** They thought He was getting there late, but Jesus came to their dead garden and every one of us needs to know that He will come to our dead gardens too. I know this was Mary and Martha's brother who died and who had been buried out there. You too may have lost a loved one and Jesus comes. There are other things that may have died in your life like a marriage, or a relationship, or a dream that you had about what you wanted to do and become and they all died. And you have been disturbed by the dead gardens of your life, but He comes. Jesus will never leave you nor forsake you, He promises that. He comes to the good times celebrations of life and He comes to the heartbreaks and the

dead gardens of life. He comes.

**The second, and more important truth, is that Jesus changed the dead garden.** He not only comes to the dead garden, but when Jesus arrives, everything can be changed. Impossible things in your life can be changed. The things that seem impossible to correct or to rectify can be changed. When Jesus walked into that dead garden in John 11, He said to the folks that were there to take the stone away, the stone that covered the opening of the grave, remove it. They said we can't, it wouldn't be good, he's been dead too long, there's nothing to be done, You don't need to go in there, and the decay in the body has certainly been taking place. And Jesus said, "Take away the stone" (John 11:39). Now what they'd never seen before was about to take place, for Jesus would call Lazarus by name and that dead corpse in the dead garden came to life, walked out of the grave with his grave clothes on, and Jesus was not through with him. He said loose him and let him go. Let's get those grave clothes off because life has come to prevail. Jesus not only comes to

us; Jesus changes everything in the dead garden. He brings life where there was death; He brings gladness where there was gloom, and He turns the pain of the pitiful moments into praise and pleasure from heaven.

**Third, and ultimately the most important, Jesus closes the dead garden.** Why do I say that? Because the Scripture says that in First Corinthians 15, the great resurrection chapter, telling us about life forever. This Scripture says that Jesus shuts down the dead garden. Where's that found you ask? In First Corinthians 15:26 it is recorded that the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For every one of us who know Jesus as Savior and Lord have experienced the wonderful life that is ours now in abundance and ours in eternity forever. Jesus takes the sting of death away, the dominance of death around us is destroyed, and He closes the dead garden for all of His children. Won't that be good? When you and I will enter into eternity with all of those who know Him who have gone before and all of those who come after us who know Jesus, we shall be together and there will be no more dead garden. For you see, when you come to know Jesus, the Scripture is so vivid. What can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or sword, almost an endless number of things, nothing can keep us from knowing the love of God in Christ Jesus that gives us life forever and forever.

For me, I was blessed to hear of the view of a little girl seeing our typical cemetery and thinking it was a dead garden. For it is, and it will be overcome and set aside and closed because death cannot keep its prey. Jesus gives us victory over the dead garden.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

## Resources coming for small church, bivo pastors

**NASHVILLE (BP)** – Utilizing a love for small churches that Joe Wright Jr., executive director of the Bivocational and Small Church Leadership Network (BSCLN), has perceived among Southern Baptists, his organization is planning an educational initiative to provide free video training and mentoring to small church and bivocational pastors and leaders, from key North American church leaders.

A quarter of the approximately 46,125 Southern Baptist churches and missions report Sunday School attendance of one to 24 individuals, Wright said, based on current Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual Church Profile reporting. Another 26% have less than 50 people in Sunday School. About 83% of churches have less than 125 people in Sunday School. Only one percent of Southern Baptist congregations serve 1,000 or more.

Larger churches "are the mountains of our convention," Wright said, "but the small hills and vales are the small churches and the mountains are not majestic without the foothills of the small churches, and that's my burden."

"If we lose the small churches in our convention," Wright said, "we lose

83% of our churches. We lose one half of the Cooperative Program. We lose one half of the baptisms. I think we lose a great portion of the vitality, and the strengths, and just the spiritual foundation of who we are as Baptists."

"It all comes out of the fiber and the fabric of the small church."

The free training will join 116 free resources currently available on the BSCLN website, including books, articles, and a complimentary thumb drive of all resources for pastors and leaders without Internet access.

Wright's goal is 2,000 online resources at [smallchurch.net](http://smallchurch.net), with hard



WRIGHT



YOUNG

copies of certain resources also available.

"What we'd like to be able to do at this point is walk into a local association office, meet with six or eight small-church pastors, open up a laptop, dial in, connect with one of these men or women who are great educators, and let them speak by video conference to these six or eight people from small churches," Wright said of the initiative.

BSCLN can facilitate that process, he noted.

Warren Haynes, associate professor at Gateway Seminary in Ontario, Ca., and author of Discipleship Uncomplicated, has agreed to be the first video

conference educator, said Wright, who is working to schedule the training through a Southern Baptist state convention.

Classes would last about two hours, allowing pastors and leaders to ask questions, interact, and learn. Wright will also use the Internet in an initiative to encourage pastors, wives, and their children to persevere in the faith and in their calling.

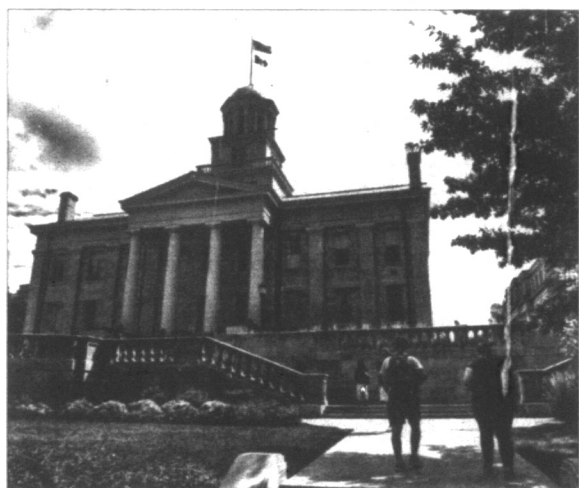
BSCLN was founded in 1997 as the Southern Baptist Bivocational Ministerial Association and was funded by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB) until 2005. Wright said, when NAMB's vision changed.

Since then, BSCLN has remained Southern Baptist, but is self-funded by gifts, grants, donations and ad hoc partnerships with state conventions.

Small-church and bivocational pastors, as well as donors and supporters, can access the network at [www.smallchurch.net](http://www.smallchurch.net) or [www.bscln.net](http://www.bscln.net). Pastors and leaders can also connect with BSCLN through regional directors. The Mississippi/Alabama representative is Joe Young at e-mail, [brojoecc@bellsouth.net](mailto:brojoecc@bellsouth.net).



# U. of Iowa reinstates religious groups – for now



University of Iowa

**IOWA CITY, Iowa (BP)** — The University of Iowa has reinstated multiple religious student groups as registered campus organizations after one rejected group threatened to seek a temporary restraining order amid pending litigation.

InterVarsity Graduate Christian Fellowship sued the university Aug. 6 because school officials revoked the fellowship's status as an official student organization over a requirement that InterVarsity Graduate leaders "share the group's faith and exemplify its Christian values," according to a complaint filed by the nonprofit Becket Fund for Religious Liberty.

The temporary reinstatement, secured when Becket threatened to seek a temporary restraining order, will apply until the lawsuit is resolved.

Christian, Muslim, Mormon, and Sikh groups were among 38 student organizations deregistered in July for allegedly failing to comply with the university's human rights policy, according to news media reports.

"This win is a win for everyone — Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs alike," Becket senior counsel Daniel Blomberg said, according to an Aug. 14 news release. "Everyone loses when state officials pick who leads students in prayer and worship, and everyone wins when religious students can make those decisions for themselves. Here's hoping the courts make the university's temporary patch into a permanent fix."

A university spokesperson told Baptist Press, "The University of Iowa does not comment on pending or ongoing litigation."

Iowa City's Press-Citizen newspaper reported the university set out in January and February to enforce its human rights policy and reviewed the constitutions of 513 student organizations. The 356 groups that did not include a "full and correct" statement of the university's human rights policy in their constitutions were given deadlines to remedy the perceived problem — June 15 for most types of organizations and Sept. 4 for sororities and fraternities.

The deregistered organizations apparently were those that did not comply to the university's satisfaction. Deregistered groups without religious ties have not been relisted on the university's student organization website, The Gazette newspaper of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, reported.

The university sent an email this week to student organizations explaining the temporary reversal for religious groups.

"Any student organization having indicated 'spiritual and religious' as a first, second or third category [of its activities] will be considered a registered student organization until the litigation against the University of Iowa involving student organizations is resolved," student life vice president Melissa Shivers wrote in an Aug. 13 email provided to Baptist Press.

Becket attorneys secured the temporary reversal by negotiating with university attorneys in hopes of getting InterVarsity Graduate back on campus in time for an Aug. 15 graduate student fair, The Gazette reported. As part of the negotiations, Becket threatened to ask for a temporary restraining order.

InterVarsity Graduate's student president Katrina Schrock said, "As we all prepare to head back to school, we're excited to know InterVarsity will also be back on campus and part of the community we love."

"These last few months have been crazy, but we're grateful to be able to get back to focusing on meeting and serving the new graduate and professional students in our Hawkeye community," according to Becket's release.

The student organization Business Leaders in Christ (BLC) filed a similar lawsuit against the university in December 2017 after it was kicked off campus for requiring leaders to hold biblical beliefs about human sexuality. A federal judge ruled in January that the university must temporarily restore BLC's registered status while the case is pending.

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**PINE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH SEEKING BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR.** Resume sent to 124 Gather Johnson Rd. Magee, MS 39111, pinegrove.baptist@att.net

**CONCORD BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING PART TIME YOUTH MINISTER.** Please email resume to garret.mauney@yahoo.com or send to Concord Baptist Church 5490 CR 601 Booneville, MS 38829.

**SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR - BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH.** Located at Meridian, MS in the Wynnd community of Southern Lauderdale County. Please email resume to office@wynndbaptist.org or mail to Bethany Baptist Church, 4475 Ponds Road, Meridian, MS 39301.

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**RAYMOND ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH, JACKSON, MS, SEEKING A PART TIME YOUTH PASTOR.** Email resume to jhomer56@hotmail.com

**UNITY BAPTIST CHURCH, MOSELLE, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL-TIME PASTOR.** Please mail resumes to Unity Baptist Church, P.O. Box 156, Moselle, MS 39459. Or you may email them to ubc.resumes@yahoo.com. Either should be designated as Attention: Pastor Search Committee.

**CAREY CHAPEL BAPTIST CHURCH MT. PLEASANT, MS IS SEEKING A STUDENT MINISTER.** Please email resume to cmaleson7722@att.net. Or mail to Carey Chapel Baptist Church, 170 Carey Chapel RD, Red Banks, MS 38861.

**RICHMOND BAPTIST CHURCH IN RURAL LEE COUNTY, MS, NEAR TUPELO IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PRAISE TEAM LEADER/MUSIC MINISTER.** Email resume to baptistworshipleader@gmail.com

## Just for the Record



A group from **MAGNOLIA CHURCH, LAUREL**, visited the Promised Land Journey in Collinsville Aug. 16.



GA's from **GILLSBURG CHURCH, GILLSBURG**, attended GA camp. Shown are Josie Easley, Lacie Clark, Kaylee Holmes, Bailee Brown, and Jorja Easley with leader Belinda Clark.



**EBENEZER CHURCH, ATTALA ASSOCIATION**, recently ordained Bob Myers as deacon. Shown are pastor Larry Harvey, Myers, and his wife, Hilda.



The United 4 Him Sunday School class of **ESCATAWPA CHURCH, ESCATAWPA**, treated the senior adults to dinner and games Aug. 4.



**MT. PISGAH CHURCH, CARROLL COUNTY**, held a fellowship meal following the dedication service for their new family life center/multipurpose building in July. Lanny Haley, pastor.



**HICKORY CHURCH, HICKORY**, extended their Vacation Bible School all summer long by offering Terrific Tuesdays for the 15th year. The musical presentation King of the Jungle concluded the summer of 2018.

### In other Church News:

➤ **Crossroads Church, Pelahatchie**, is offering GriefShare, a ministry to help those who have lost a loved one. Fall sessions begin 6:30 p.m. Sept. 4 for 13 weeks. For more information, visit [www.crossroadspel.org](http://www.crossroadspel.org) or call (601)546-2297.

## Staff Changes



**ROCKY CREEK CHURCH, LUCEDALE**, has called Lee Merck as pastor. He is shown with his wife Christie and four daughters.



**WILLIAMSBURG CHURCH, COLLINS**, has called Ronnie Purser as pastor. He is shown with his wife, Brenda.



**OAK HILL CHURCH, POPLARVILLE**, has called Brady McElhenney as youth pastor. He is shown with his wife Lalah.



# LifeWay Research: politics dividing churches

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — As America has become increasingly divided by politics in recent years, so have its Protestant churches, according to a study released Aug. 23 by LifeWay Research, an arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches.

More than half (57%) of Protestant churchgoers under age 50 say they prefer to go to church with people who share their political views, and few adult Protestant churchgoers say they attend services with people of a different political persuasion.

"Like many places in America, churches are divided by politics," said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, "and churchgoers under 50 seem to want it that way."

For the study, LifeWay Research surveyed 1,010 Americans who attend services at least once a month at a Protestant or nondenominational church.

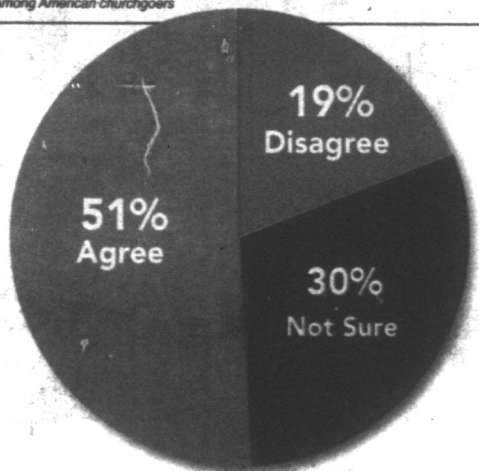
Forty-six percent agree with the statement, "I prefer to attend a church where people share my political views." Forty-two percent disagree. Twelve percent are not sure.

Fifty-seven percent of churchgoers ages 18 to 49 agree. Fewer churchgoers ages 50 to 64 (39%) or ages 65 and over (33%) agree. Men (51%) are more likely to agree than women (43%).

Methodist (57%), nondenominational (51%) and Baptist (49%) churchgoers are more likely to agree than churchgoers from other denominations.

## My political views match those of most people at my church.

Among American churchgoers



Lutherans (33%) are less likely to agree.

"Only a third of churchgoers in the study had strong feelings on this subject," McConnell said. Twelve percent strongly agree, while 22 percent strongly disagree.

"Politics doesn't seem to be a high priority for most Protestants when choosing a church to attend," he said, "but for a small group of churchgoers, it's really crucial."

LifeWay Research also asked Protestant churchgoers if their political views match those of people in their church.

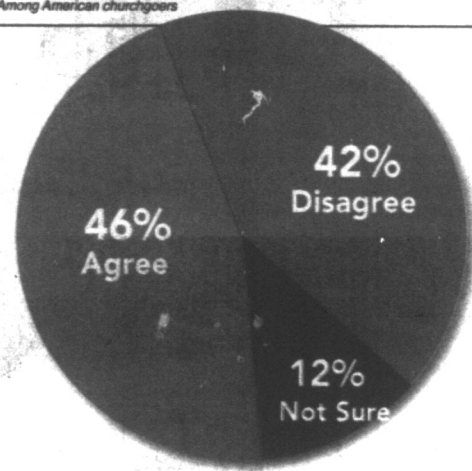
Half agree their political views match those of people in their church, while 19% disagree and 30% are uncertain.

Churchgoers ages 35 to 49 (61%) are more likely to agree than those ages 50 to 64 (47%) or those 65 and older (44%). Men (58%) are more likely to agree than women (46%). Those who attend services at least once a week (52%) are more likely to agree than those who attend once or twice a month (43%).

American churchgoers who hold evangelical beliefs are more likely to agree their politi-

## I prefer to attend a church where people share my political views.

Among American churchgoers



cal views match others in their church (57%), compared to those who don't hold evangelical beliefs (44%).

Baptist (58%), nondenominational (54%), and Assemblies of God/Pentecostal (53%) churchgoers are more likely to agree. Lutherans are less likely (31%).

Protestant churchgoers and other Americans who attend worship services at least once a month made up about half of voters (52%) in the 2016 presidential election, according to data from Pew Research.

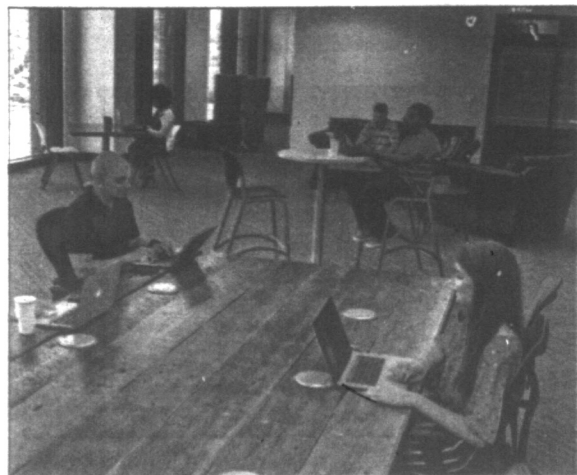
Churchgoers are likely to

stick around even if they disagree over politics. A previous LifeWay Research study of Protestant and nondenominational churchgoers found only one in 10 would consider leaving their church over political views.

"More than a few churchgoers in the most recent study (30%) don't know the political views of people besides them in the pews," McConnell said.

"Politics isn't the only thing that churchgoers care about," he said. "In some churches, politics isn't mentioned at all — at least in the pews."

## LifeWay seeks to help budding Christian entrepreneurs



FaithWorks

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville has launched FaithWorks, a faith-based co-working and shared office space concept designed to provide workspaces and services for Christian entrepreneurs, freelancers, startups, and small businesses.

"We're looking to attract individuals or small business owners who share LifeWay's values," said Amy Thompson, LifeWay's director of corporate affairs.

The idea of hosting a co-working space came from LifeWay President Thom S. Rainer.

"As more people work for themselves rather than employers, many need a place to work beyond the traditional office lease and structure," Rainer said. "When we completed our new facility, I saw a perfect op-

portunity for LifeWay to move into the co-working world with a first-class facility and a faith-based environment."

LifeWay moved to its new downtown location in Nashville's Capitol View development last November, with proximity to Interstate 65/40 providing easy access to the rest of metro area.

A variety of workspace choices are available, from open seating to dedicated desks and private offices. Competitively priced with similar service providers, FaithWorks offers with each membership level:

- Free WiFi.
- Access to the LifeWay Café.
- On-site fitness center membership.
- Conference rooms.

FaithWorks members also will enjoy community-focused perks, such as invitations to at-

tend LifeWay employee chapels which often feature renowned Bible teachers and Christian artists, and opportunities to participate in employee events such as on-campus Bible studies and local service projects.

There is also an option for members to add onsite parking to their membership.

LifeWay's Capitol View location offers FaithWorks members convenient access to restaurants and retail shops in a walkable neighborhood. "Coworking spaces in Nashville are very popular right now," Thompson said. "Having one in this growing area is great for the new and soon-to-come businesses."

"It's a way for LifeWay to be a good neighbor by bringing potential new customers to the restaurants and shops and being a positive presence in Capitol View."

# LifeWay president, CEO Rainer announces retirement in 2019

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — Thom S. Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, announced Aug. 27 that he plans to retire in the coming year.

Rainer told LifeWay trustees during his report at their Aug. 27-28 meeting in Nashville he is confident in the future of LifeWay to a large degree because of the focus, talent, and ministry conviction of its employees.

"The past 13 years have been some of the most blessed years of my life," Rainer said. "I love LifeWay and the incredible men and women who serve the Lord with joy and hard work, while equipping the church for her mission of making disciples."

To provide adequate time for the search process for the next president and CEO and for a smooth transition, Rainer said he will serve until a new president is named or through the end of August 2019, whichever comes first.

Rainer, who turned age 63 in July, told trustees he made the decision to retire with the firm conviction it was time for his departure. "It is time to pass the baton of leadership to a new generation. The next president will lead an organization poised for a great future. Though it will come with challenges, I have never been more excited about the future of LifeWay."

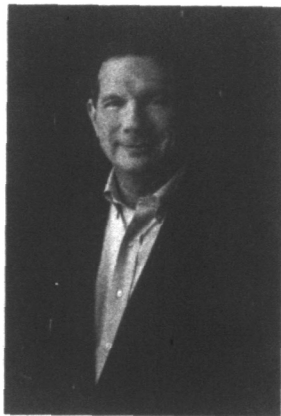
Speaking on behalf of LifeWay's board of trustees, board chair Jimmy Scroggins said: "We are deeply grateful for the work Dr. Rainer and his staff have accomplished the past 13 years to support churches in their mission of making disciples and providing biblical solutions for life."

"Dr. Rainer has strategically led through times of economic uncertainty, the digital revolution, changing church practices, and tumultuous shifts in culture. His foresight and ability to lead change has well prepared LifeWay for the future as the organization continues to impact and influence the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Rainer became the ninth president of the Southern Baptist entity in Feb. 2006. Significant advancements during his tenure include:

- Five consecutive years of growth in ongoing curriculum after nearly 30 years of decline. Helping fuel the growth is The Gospel Project, a group Bible study focused on theology. Initially projected to draw 30,000 users, the curriculum now engages more than 1.5 million weekly users in the study of God's Word.

- The strategic sale of LifeWay's former campus and moving LifeWay's headquarters to a new location in downtown Nashville, completed in 2018.



**RAINER**

- Expanding LifeWay's worldwide reach through LifeWay Global. Last year, LifeWay Global distributed resources to 164 of the world's 195 countries, reaching more than four million people, and LifeWay resources are licensed in more than 60 languages.

During Rainer's time as president, LifeWay has also made several key acquisitions including Wordsearch Bible, Student Life, and Auxano.

Rainer has authored more than two dozen books, including his most recent books titled, *Becoming a Welcoming Church*; *I Will: Nine Traits of an Outwardly Focused Christian*; *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*; and the award-winning

and best-selling *I Am a Church Member*.

His website, ThomRainer.com, continues to reach more than 10 million viewers annually. His two podcasts, *Rainer on Leadership* and *Revitalize & Replant* with Thom Rainer, have a combined total of 1.5 million downloads.

Rainer said he strongly desires to dedicate the next phase of his life to making a contribution to the revitalization of churches. "I love the local church. I want to give every minute God allows me to make a difference to see churches revitalized."

Rainer noted he is planning to begin a nonprofit organization called *Revitalize Network* to help churches grow healthier.

He also plans to maximize his time with family in retirement. "I love my family and am looking forward to having more flexibility to spend time with them," he said.

Rainer and his wife Nellie Jo have three sons and daughters-in-law and 10 grandchildren.

LifeWay is one of the world's largest providers of Christian products and services, including Bibles, books, Bible studies, music, church supplies, encampments, and events.

Established in Nashville in 1891 and previously known as the Baptist Sunday School Board, the company owns and operates more than 170 LifeWay Christian Stores throughout the United States — six stores in Mississippi — as well as Ridgecrest Christian Conference Center in North Carolina.



**SPECIAL GIFT** — A pair of boys in a remote village of Uganda cradle a young goat that was given to their family by Baptist Global Response (BGR). (BP photo courtesy of BGR)

## BGR 'GoatFundMe' to benefit poor families

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — Baptist Global Response (BGR) has launched a "GoatFundMe" campaign to purchase 1,000 goats for people in need around the world.

BGR undergirds the worldwide work of Southern Baptists and likeminded partners. BGR is not an official entity of the Southern Baptist Convention, but is committed to helping Southern Baptists connect with people in need around the world.

One goat costs roughly \$75, so BGR has set a \$75,000 goal for the campaign.

Jeff Palmer, BGR's CEO, said GoatFundMe focuses on one very useful animal to help improve life for a multitude of families. "Goats can produce healthy, nutritious

milk for families and in most cases, their milk is even recommended over cow's milk because of its favorable protein composition.

"Goats not only produce milk but they can also produce meat for the family as well as extra income through the selling of their offspring. Moreover, they are easy to raise, take up very little land area, and are, for the most part, a hardy animal that can survive in a variety of climates."

BGR has published downloadable resources online at [gobgr.org/goatfundme](http://gobgr.org/goatfundme) to help churches and individuals raise support for the campaign. Those resources include two games, a list of fundraising ideas, and a plan for a goat-themed youth event.

## BIBLiOCiPHER


LKG HK MKPNLVDRL UC NUWBH-  
VKPLCVLL, NVYE UC AVNJM; ONVYF  
PE MKPN QYDDKG WNKPCX: QKN UH  
UL HUAV HK LVVF HBV DKNX, HUDD  
BV JKAU YCX NYUC NUWBHVKPLCVLL  
PEKC MKP.

BKLVY HVC: HGVDRV

Clue: B = H

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 5:32

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005



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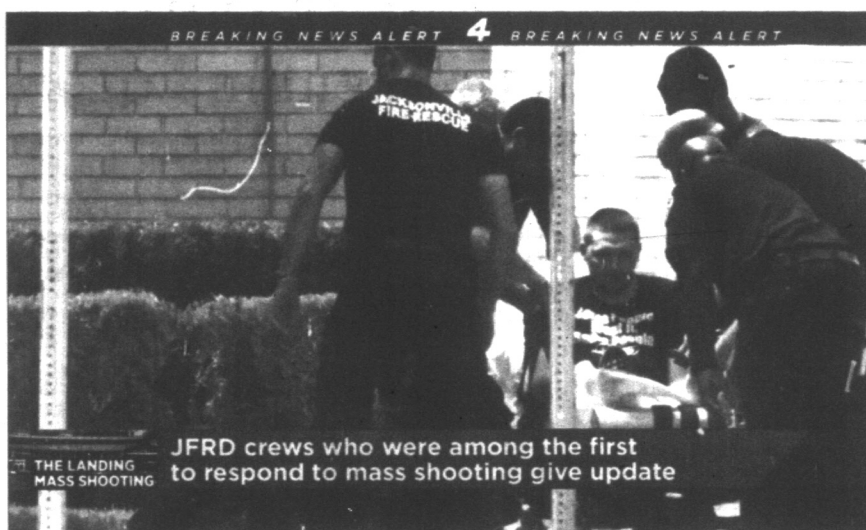
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JFRD crews who were among the first to respond to mass shooting give update

**ANOTHER SHOOTING** — First responders aid a victim of the mass shooting Aug. 26 during a Madden NFL 19 video game tournament at Jacksonville Landing in downtown Jacksonville, FL. (BP screen capture courtesy of News4Jax in Jacksonville)

## Jacksonville shootings prompt church ASK prayer gatherings

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)** — Four deaths and 13 injuries from shootings at two sporting events this past weekend in Jacksonville, Fla., have leaders lamenting a “new normal” of violence amid calls to prayer that seemingly fade away.

Three were killed and 11 injured August 26 in a mass shooting at a high stakes video game tournament in downtown Jacksonville, following the killing of one and the injury of two others at a high security Friday night high school football game just seven miles away.

Police attributed the football game shooting at William Marion Raines Senior High School to gang activity, according to news reports.

The violence follows the Valentine's Day 2018 massacre of 14 students and staff at a Parkland, Fla., high school that also injured 17 students.

Several Southern Baptist churches hosted concurrent Ask Seek Knock (ASK) prayer gatherings Aug. 28 in and around Jacksonville. The time and theme were based on Matthew 7:7, said Rick Wheeler, Jacksonville Association lead missionary strategist.

“Jesus says in the Scripture, ‘Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.’”

School and community leaders are reviewing safety measures and conducting investigations. The gunman at Sunday's video game tournament is among the dead.

The host of one of the eight prayer gatherings scheduled to date, senior pastor David Tark-

ington of First Church in Orange Park, expressed his view in a blog post today.

“There is a lesson for us in this. Confronted with the unvarnished evil of Sunday's shooting, we must counter it with love. The antidote to hate is love.”

**Heath Lambert**  
senior pastor of First Church, Jacksonville

“It is at times like this when community leaders, news agencies, and even those with no belief in God, call for things to be done,” Tarkington wrote.

“The word ‘pray’ becomes a hashtag that trends for a few days as many use social media to state we must #PrayForJacksonville.”

“I believe that and am even sharing that statement, but the church of Jesus Christ must not fall into the trap of seeing prayer as a weak, viral response to tragedy,” Tarkington blogged.

“One Jacksonville city leader stated ‘We really need to talk about God. I’m asking the faith-based community to step up.’”

“I cannot disagree with that, but the church must understand that to ‘step up’ means we must first kneel before God together, seeking His face, His will, while confessing our sins of complacency and self-promotion.”

“Pray. Step up. Kneel down,” Tarkington urged. “Step outside and be the light in the darkness.”

Heath Lambert, senior pastor of First Church in Jacksonville, said the latest shooting reminds him of the love God displayed in the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus on the cross more than 2,000 years ago, followed by Jesus’ miraculous resurrection.

“There is a lesson for us in this. Confronted with the unvarnished evil of Sunday's shooting, we must counter it with love. The antidote to hate is love,” Lambert wrote Sunday. “There are all sorts of ways we can love each other in the aftermath of this obvious hatred, but one way was made obvious in the hashtag, #Pray4Jax, that quickly appeared on social media. Right now, one of the most tangible ways we can love our city is with our prayers.”

Many lamented the killings as too common and a new normal, including Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry.

“We have faced an occurrence that is all too common,” Curry said Sunday at Jacksonville.com, the website of the Florida Times Union. “At terrible times, we see the best in people, and today is no different.”

Police identified the shooter as 24-year-old David Katz of Maryland, who reportedly opened fire during a Madden NFL 19 tournament at Chicago Pizza, a restaurant at Jacksonville Landing. The tournament included cash prizes totaling \$165,000, according to the Madden Classic website. Police did not state a motive for the 1:30 p.m. shooting, but a witness told Jacksonville.com that Katz was losing the game.

## 75 FOUNDATION FLASHBACK

Highlights from the history of your Mississippi Baptist Foundation shared in the format of their original publication in *The Baptist Record*. The following article was published on September 16, 1971.

## September Designated As Baptist Foundation Month

By Carey E. Cox  
Executive Secretary  
Mississippi Baptist Foundation

September is designated Foundation month in the Southern Baptist Convention calendar of activities.

It is a time when Southern Baptists are to be reminded of the services offered by their state Foundations and the responses which should be made to its services.

Much thought is given by most Baptists in the area of improving their economic status.

Unfortunately, the same amount of thought is not given to God's will as it is related to estate planning.

Every Christian would do well to constantly remember that we are stewards of the total of life and of that part of God's material blessings which shall be left at our decease.

You are encouraged to call on your Mississippi Baptist Foundation for assistance in establishing a trust agreement and in guidance for the production of Christian wills.

The record of your Foundation is such as should inspire total confidence in the areas of safety as well as commendation in the excellent investment yields produced.

For the fiscal year which closed June 30, 1971, the yield on the Trust and Annuities Fund was 6.88 per cent and the

yield on the General Endowment Fund was 7.17 per cent.

This excellent yield is a testimony to the astute investment of funds by the investment committee which is composed of outstanding Christian laymen.

The principal of the funds administered by the Foundation is \$3,367,186.00. The gifts for the year amounted to \$226,078.00.

The Foundation earned for the accounts serviced \$207,692.00.

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation establishes trust agreement of various kinds but specifically where the total of the income produced shall forever thereafter go to the cause of Christ designated by the donor.

We also have many trust agreements where an individual or couple received the total income produced during their entire life but after the decease of the person or persons the income thereafter goes to the denominational cause previously designated.

Annually the Foundation is increasing the number of wills properly produced whereby some part of the estate shall ultimately give support to some area of the denominational program.

Your Mississippi Baptist Foundation invites your inquiry into its functions and offers to serve you in these and other areas.

»»» Visit [msbaptistfoundation.org](http://msbaptistfoundation.org), call 601-292-3210, or e-mail [foundation@mbcb.org](mailto:foundation@mbcb.org) to learn how your church can encourage legacy giving through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation during the month of September.

## SBC

cont. from p. 1

David Hankins, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention in Alexandria, told BP the Atlanta meeting was characterized by "a great spirit, camaraderie, and willingness to work together."

In the May 31 issue of *The Baptist Message*, the weekly news journal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, Hankins wrote, "J.D.'s long-term record shows he has been unsupportive of state convention work. I am happy he now is saying that he values state conventions. But until about three years ago, he gave very little through the [Cooperative Program], and much of what he led his church to give to SBC causes was given around the state convention."

Hankins, who endorsed former Southwestern Seminary president Ken Hemphill for SBC president — Greear's only opponent — during last June's election at the 2018 SBC annual meeting in Dallas, said Greear "really wants to move forward" the same types of initiatives in which Hankins was interested during the election campaign.

"These are the leaders who have been leading in the things before I became president and likely will be there leading after my term. I wanted to know how I could serve them, catalyze their efforts in evangelism and mobilization, and bring cohesion to many of the wonderful things already going on throughout the SBC."

J.D. Greear

**Southern Baptist Convention president**

Those include the Gospel for everyone; growing support for the Cooperative Program; and cooperation among the various levels of Southern Baptist life.

The state executives and Greear agreed, according to the news release:

■ "That a new Gospel-above-all culture needs to prevail amongst pastors, associations, state conven-

tions, national entities and seminaries;"

■ "That the good news, that Jesus came to save sinners, should supersede all geographic, secondary theological, cultural and generational differences; and

■ "To (1) assume the best in one another and that they have good intentions, (2) when in doubt to give the benefit of the doubt, and (3) when a question arose or a difference in opinion, extending grace to each other in the same way Christ showed us on the cross."

Greear is senior pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, N.C. Vines is senior pastor of New Seasons Church in San Diego, Ca. Second Vice President Felix Cabrera, lead pastor of Iglesia Bautista Central Church in Oklahoma City, was invited but could not attend.

According to Baptist polity, churches, state conventions, and the Southern Baptist Convention are independent of each other — making their own ministerial and administrative decisions — and choose to voluntarily affiliate with each other. All three groups participate in giving to the Cooperative Program.

## HUNT

cont. from p. 1

he will walk with the church through the transition to new leadership and begin serving full time with NAMB at the beginning of 2019.

On Aug. 12, NAMB announced formation of the Evangelism and Leadership group and that Jim Law would serve as its executive director. Law, who has served under Hunt as executive pastor of First Church, Woodstock, for nearly 28 years, will begin at NAMB on Oct. 1.

Law will handle day-to-day leadership for the group while Hunt casts vision, stirs passion for evangelism among Southern Baptists, and mobilizes pastors and churches, NAMB has said.

"I am humbled and overwhelmed by God's favor and blessing to have a leader like Johnny Hunt willing to join the NAMB family," said NAMB President Kevin Ezell. "The vision, passion, and leadership he will bring will help us motivate pastors to lead out in evangelism."

The group Hunt and Law

will be leading at NAMB will be focused on championing the cause of evangelism among Southern Baptist churches and pastors. The group will also equip pastors with tools and leadership skills that will allow them to lead their churches to become more evangelistically active.

J.D. Greear, current Southern Baptist Convention president and senior pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., called Hunt's pending move to NAMB a "great day" for Southern Baptists.

"For as long as I can remember, pastor Johnny has been carrying the torch for evangelism and demonstrating what evangelistic faithfulness looks like both in life and in the context of a local church," Greear said. I can't imagine anyone more qualified to lead us in this.

"I know it is a sad day for First Baptist Church Woodstock, but it is a great day for the larger Southern Baptist community. I believe his life and passion will lead to great joy among the lost in our communities!"

## GUIDESTONE

Cont. from p. 1

ing on behalf of the unborn."

The web site for the Washington, D.C.-based Becket Fund for Religious Liberty describes the organization as "a non-profit, public-interest legal and educational institute with a mission to protect the free expression of all faiths."

The final judgment was a necessary step due to continued legal challenges to attempts to

roll back the Obama-era mandate by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump.

"While the courts continue to consider challenges to the new rule, the judgment gives clarity and security for all who are served by GuideStone's health plans," said Harold R. Loftin Jr., GuideStone's chief legal officer.

No ministries served by GuideStone were ever subjected to fines. A preliminary injunction granted in December 2013 provided protection for

those ministries. Churches and certain closely-held ministries were exempt from the mandate from the beginning.

"This judgment, occurring in this our centennial year, is important as it continues to testify to GuideStone's commitment to advocate on behalf of our participants and the churches and ministries we are privileged to serve," Hawkins said.

GuideStone is currently celebrating the 100-year anniversary of its founding.

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39208-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



## Holding on to Truth • Galatians 1:1-10

God has truly blessed me with the incredible opportunity to serve as a NAMB-endorsed chaplain at Louisiana State Penitentiary. Better known as Angola, LSP is a maximum-security prison housing approximately 6,000 men. Angola was known as "the bloodiest prison in America." Today, I believe, Angola is the most blood-bought prison in America.

While sitting with a group of offenders I asked, "What is the Gospel?" I received widely varying answers. "God saved me," "Matthew, Mark, Luke and John," "The Bible," "The plan of salvation," "The kingdom of God." One offender said, "I hope I can do enough good things to balance out all of the bad things I have done." So many different answers, but are any of them correct?

Paul was facing the same problem. He wrote a letter to the churches of Galatia, including Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. In Galatians 1:1-10, Paul introduced himself as an apostle, appointed by God. He declared that his authority came from God. He offered a blessing of grace and peace, both of which could only be found through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. Then Paul shared his concern.

Paul was struggling with the fact that some of the Galatians were abandoning "the gospel" and were submit-

ting to a life bound by the law. They were believing "another gospel." False teachers known as Judaizers were teaching that a Gentile was required to obey the Jewish laws and be circumcised to be saved. Paul wrote, "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel..." (v. 6, NASB).

While the Judaizers and my men had a variety of answers concerning the gospel, let's really nail down "the Gospel" to which Paul refers. Let's consider three points: The Need, the Gospel, and the Motivation.

**The Need.** When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, sin became a raging river separating us from God. That river is so treacherous that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, we can do in our own strength to cross it.

**The Gospel.** The NASB uses the term *gospel* ninety-nine times. In the New Testament, *gospel*, or *euangelion* in the Greek, means "good news." The

Good News begins with Jesus. So who is Jesus? Scriptures reveal the following. "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14). Immanuel means *God with us*. "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." (John 1:1,14). "But of the Son He (God) says, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom'" (Heb. 1:8). These scriptures tell us that Jesus is God the Son.

Paul explained that God the Father bridged that treacherous river of sin with Jesus. "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you re-

ceived, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved.... For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve...to more than five hundred brethren at one time...to James, then to all the apostles...He appeared to me also" (1 Cor. 15:1-8). That's it – the Gospel! Jesus bridged the river providing salvation and victory over our sin, by His life, death, resurrection, ascension. We cannot add anything – not works, not Jewish law or circumcision, not being good enough. True peace comes only by the grace of God through faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus. That's the Gospel message that God appoints all believers to deliver.

**The Motivation.** Love! God loves us so much that He chose to bridge our sin for us. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

McGraw is development director of Crossroads SW Counseling Center, a conference speaker, life coach, and member of Woodville Church.



Explore the Bible  
with Liz McGraw

## Reality Check • Titus 3:3-11

"If every member of my church were just like me, what type of church would my church be?" I first heard that in the 1970's from a fellow pastor in Central Louisiana who preached a revival where I served as pastor. How easy it is to complain about other members of our church when God speaks only to individuals through messages and His word. Our focal passage in Titus 3:4-6 reads, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," (KJV).

God saves us all one at a time, and He speaks to us the same way. If every member of my church welcomed people as I do, how would my church welcome visitors? Most churches are friendly enough, but its members are reluctant to become true friends with people. This Scripture teaches that God saves us by the washing of regeneration. That means He makes us over. We are born again. 2 Corinthians 5:17 reads, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all

things are become new," (KJV).

Sadly, in my forty-two years as pastor, I have seen too many people visit a church, only to be ignored by its members. Often members speak to them once, and then forget them. I am so glad that the Lord did not speak to me once and then forget me. For several months I fought the Spirit of the Lord until I finally surrendered and was saved. The members of the church are its welcome mat to potential new members, lost or saved. People judge the church by its members, as well as its music and message.

My brother, Ralph and I were summer missionaries during college in 1972 for the then Home Mission Board, now-called the North American Mission Board. He served in Montana and I in North Carolina. Ralph told me that in Montana he met a man in a church sitting on the second row who said to him, "Brother Ralph, I was

saved right here thirty years ago, and I've been sitting here being religious ever since." God did not save any of us to sit down and be religious, but to go into all the world and preach the gospel. If we are unwilling to speak to visitors at our home church, how will we ever speak to lost people away from church?

Titus 3:7-8 reads, "That being justified by his grace, we should be made

his actions, according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they

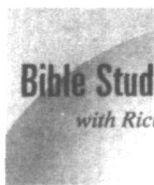
which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men," (KJV). This text teaches that we must be careful to maintain good works. Where better to start than at our home church. I recall visiting a church many decades ago and its members staring at my wife and me. No one spoke, except to each other asking, "Who is that?"

We really felt welcomed. We learned quickly that they have few visitors, and even fewer return visitors.

Through September and the first week in October, our lessons will be about connecting to and engaging people in our church. The first step is a fearless inventory of how we are doing now. Paul had to warn Titus to teach his members not to get distracted. Titus 3:9 warns, "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain," (KJV). How easily we are distracted from the mission of the church, whether by contentions, foolish questions, or who is in charge. Then we do not serve the Lord and reach others with the gospel.

Jesus taught in Matthew 15:13, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up," (KJV). I fear much of what we call essential in church was not planted by the Father and will not last. A line from an old song taught, "Only what's done for Christ will count on the scales of eternity." If every member of my church were just like me, what type of church would my church be?

Henson is a member of Meadow Grove Church, Brandon.



Bible Studies for Life  
with Rick Henson



# Return of remains is moving experience for chaplain

**OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea (BP)**

— Before dawn on July 27, United Nations Command Chaplain (U.S. Army Colonel) Sam Lee, a Southern Baptist, stepped onto a U.S. Air Force C-17 aircraft at Osan Air Base in South Korea to lead prayer for crew members who were about to take off on a historic flight across the border to North Korea.

"I woke up at 3:30 a.m. and prayed for them before they departed," Lee said. "The mood was both excitement and solemn."

A few hours later, the same plane returned to the base with 55 small wooden coffins draped in the flag of the United Nations containing the remains of U.S. soldiers. Lee again boarded the plane to pray.

"When I knelt down and touched the boxes, there was an overwhelming feeling of gratitude because the mission went well, and we were finally going to be able to fulfill our vow to these soldiers that we will never leave a fallen comrade behind."

## 'Moving Ceremony'

After a few days of initial analysis and identification efforts by American military specialists, Lee helped lead a repatriation ceremony for the remains before they were placed on U.S. aircraft and transported to Hawaii for further DNA analysis and identification.

"It was a very moving ceremony," Lee said. "I began with an invocation and then representatives of the nations that fought alongside the United States in the Korean War came and paid respects to the fallen."

Lee said the historic nature of the event was not lost on anyone present. "From privates to generals, we were all grateful for the opportunity to participate in this."

Bugles played taps and the national anthems of the United States and South Korea. "I wore my stole for the ceremony when we received the remains at the air base," Lee said. "Normally at funerals, I wear it with the black side out but I decided to wear the white side out because it symbolizes peace."

"To me, it was also a symbol to our other fallen comrades that we will not leave them alone, and they will be remembered."

## Closure

Douglas L. Carver, currently the executive director of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's chaplaincy team and retired U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains, said Lee and military chaplains like him play a key role in helping the families of fallen soldiers find closure.

"Like all military chaplains, Sam had the solemn and noble responsibility of honoring our fallen service members," Carver said. "I'm certain his prayers over our troops killed in action during the Korean War helped bring a much-needed closure to the families of the fallen as well as rendering the highest respect from the American people and Southern Baptists."

## Lee's testimony

Lee was born in South Korea and came to the United States at age 19 to attend college. "I was born into a Christian family, so I thought I was a Christian but one night at a small, nearby Southern Baptist church, I came under conviction



**COMING HOME** — United Nations Command Chaplain (U.S. Army Colonel) Sam Lee, a Southern Baptist stationed in South Korea, pronounces a blessing of sacrifice and remembrance July 27 on the 55 coffins of American remains from the 1950-53 Korean War. As the Korean War was a United Nations police action, the cases are draped with the flag of that organization. (BP photo courtesy of U.S. Army)

from the Holy Spirit. I couldn't stop crying. I couldn't control it."

The next day he met with the pastor and accepted Jesus. "That's why I still have a love for Southern Baptists to this day," Lee said.

Lee went on to earn a master's degree in Christian education from Dallas Theological Seminary and a master of divinity from Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. While serving as an Army chaplain, he completed a third master's degree in national security strategy from National Defense University at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C.

Lee began his military service in 1991 and transitioned to the chaplaincy ministry in 1995. He has seen a lot in that time and ministered in tough situations. During a deployment in Iraq, his unit lost 34 soldiers.

Lee was also assigned to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center outside Washington, D.C., where soldiers with the most serious war injuries come for treatment and recovery.

"Those experiences made me understand just how brutal war is and how fragile our bodies can be," Lee said, "but it also made me grateful to live in a country where we value each individual's life so highly."

Lee previously served in South Korea from 2012-2014. His latest assignment there began in April of this year.

As command chaplain for U.S. Forces Korea, Lee supervises all U.S. military chaplains serving in South Korea as well as those serving under the Combined Forces Command (the combined U.S.-South Korea forces) and United Nations Command, the United Nations entity that oversees the Korean Armistice agreement that was signed in 1953.

## Mississippi wing of Civil Air Patrol issues call for volunteer chaplains

The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is an all-volunteer, U.S. Air Force Auxiliary. Our three missions include: Cadet Programs, Emergency Services, and Aerospace Education. We are proud of the Volunteer Chaplain Service we provide. We are looking for chaplains to serve our units in Columbus, Jackson, the Gulf Coast, Meridian, Oxford, and Vicksburg.

To become a CAP chaplain, the individual must meet the following requirements:

- Possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
- Have an earned master's degree in religion, counseling, or social work (72 hours) from an accredited institution.
- Be endorsed by your denominational chaplain support office.
- Both veterans and non-veterans may apply!

For more information, contact me at (601) 677-3687, or e-mail Smelserdr@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,

Chaplain David R. Smelser, Lt Col, CAP

Mississippi Wing Chaplain

601-677-3687 (H); 601-770-2816 (C)

U.S. Air Force Auxiliary

\*Accreditation must be from an institution listed by a regional educational accreditation organization (i.e., SACS) and the Association of Theological Schools.

## 7,700 to go

After the United States provided 90% of the military personnel fighting under the United Nations flag, more than 36,000 U.S. troops died in the Korean War and more than 7,700 are still unaccounted for.

This latest return of the remains of U.S. soldiers by North Korea occurred on the 65th anniversary of the signing of the armistice agreement between the North Korean government and the United Na-

tions that brought the fighting to a stop.

However, the Korean War has never been formally ended. Representatives from North and South Korea met in April of this year and agreed to negotiate a treaty that would bring the war to a formal end.

More than 1,600 Southern Baptist chaplains serve the U.S. military. The North American Mission Board endorses those chaplains on behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention.